

Recycled Water Task Force Recommends Ways to Increase Water Supplies

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Over the course of nearly 14 months the Recycled Water Task Force conducted intensive study in collaboration with many other experts, the public at large, and State staff to develop recommendations for actions at many levels. The recommendations of the Task Force are not restricted to legislative actions or statutory changes. Many can be implemented by State or local agencies without further legislative authorization or mandate. Some recommendations draw upon the

experience of many agencies and provide advice that can be used as a toolbox for communities to improve their planning for recycled water projects. The Task Force identified and adopted 26 issues with respective recommendations to address obstacles, impediments, and opportunities for California to increase its recycled water usage. Recommendations associated with thirteen of these issues were adopted as key recommendations

deserving of more immediate attention. The Task Force intends for its report to be used as a working tool to guide the Legislature, state government, public agencies, the public and all water recycling stakeholders towards the safe and successful expansion of recycled water use to help meet the State's future water supply needs. For more information about the recommendations of the Task Force visit www.owue.water.ca.gov/recycle.

Issues and Recommendations Made by the Recycled Water Task Force

Funding for Water Recycling Projects State funding for water reuse/recycling facilities and infrastructure should be increased beyond Proposition 50 and other current sources. The California Water Commission in collaboration with DWR and SWRCB to seek federal cost sharing legislation for water recycling.

Community Value-Based Decision-making Model for Project Planning Local agencies should engage the public in an active dialogue and participation using a community value-based decision-making model in planning water recycling projects.

Leadership Support for Water Recycling State government should take a leadership role in encouraging recycled water use and improve consistency of policy within branches of state government and local agencies should create well-defined recycled water ordinances and enforce them.

Educational Curriculum The State should develop comprehensive education curricula for public schools; and institutions of higher education should incorporate recycled water education into their curricula.

State-sponsored Media Campaign The State should develop a water issues information program, including water recycling, for radio, television, print, and other media.

Uniform Plumbing Code Appendix J The State should revise Appendix J of the Uniform Plumbing Code, which addresses plumbing within buildings with both potable and recycled water systems, and adopt a California version that will be enforceable in the State.

DHS Guidance on Cross-connection Control The Department of Health Services should prepare guidance that would clarify the intent and applicability of Title 22, Article 5 of the California Code of Regulations pertaining to dual plumbed systems and amend this article to be consistent with requirements included in a California version of Appendix J that the Task Force is recommending to be adopted.

Health and Safety Regulation The Department of Health Services should involve stakeholders in a review of various factors to identify any needs for enhancing existing local and State health regulation associated with the use of recycled water.

Incidental Runoff The State should investigate, within the current legal framework, alternative approaches to achieve more consistent and less burdensome regulatory mechanisms affecting incidental runoff of recycled water from use sites.

Uniform Interpretation of State Standards The State should create uniform interpretation of State standards in State and local regulatory programs by taking specific steps recommended by the Task Force.

Water Softeners The Legislature should amend the Health and Safety Code Sections 116775 through 116795 to reduce the restrictions on local ability to impose bans on or more stringent standards for residential water softeners. Within the current legal provisions on water softeners, local agencies should consider publicity campaigns to educate consumers regarding the impact of self-regenerative water softeners.

Issues and Recommendations Made by the Recycled Water Task Force

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Uniform Analytical Method for Economic Analyses A uniform and economically valid procedural framework should be developed to determine the economic benefits and costs of water recycling projects for use by local, State, and federal agencies.

Research Funding The State should expand funding sources to include sustainable State funding for research on recycled water issues.

University Academic Program for Water Recycling The State should encourage an integrated academic program on one or more campuses for water reuse research and education, such as through State research funding.

Funding Coordination A revised funding procedure should be developed to provide local agencies with assistance in potential State and federal funding opportunities and a Water Recycling Coordination Committee should be established to work with funding agencies.

Regional Planning Criterion State funding agencies should make better use of existing regional planning studies to determine the funding priority of projects. This process would not exclude projects from funding where regional plans do not exist.

Funding Information Outreach Funding agencies should publicize funding availability through workshops, conferences, and the internet.

Department of Water Resources Technical Assistance Funding sources should be expanded to include sustainable state funding for DWR's technical assistance and research, including flexibility to work on local and regional planning, emerging issues, and new technology.

Project Performance Analysis Resources should be provided to funding agencies to perform comprehensive analysis of the performance of existing recycled water projects in terms of costs and benefits and recycled water deliveries.

Recycled Water Symbol Code Change The Department of Housing and Community Development should submit a code change to remove the requirement for the skull and crossbones symbol in Sections 601.2.2 and 601.2.3 of the California Plumbing Code.

Stakeholder Review of Proposed Cross-connection Control Regulations Stakeholders are encouraged to review Department of Health Services draft changes to Title 17 of the Code of Regulations pertaining to cross-connections between potable and nonpotable water systems.

Cross-connection Risk Assessment The Department of Health Services should support a thorough assessment of the risk associated with cross-connections between disinfected tertiary recycled water and potable water.

Permitting Procedures Various measures should be conducted to improve the administration and compliance with local and state permits.

Source Control Local agencies should maintain strong source control programs and increase public awareness of their importance in reducing pollution and ensuring a safe recycled water supply.

Economic Analyses Local agencies are encouraged to perform economic analyses in addition to financial analyses for water recycling projects and state and federal agencies should require economic and financial feasibility as two funding criteria in their funding programs.

Statewide Science-based Panel on Indirect Potable Reuse As required by AB 331, the Task Force reviewed the 1996 report of the California Indirect Potable Reuse Committee and other related advisory panel reports and concluded that reconvening this committee would not be worthwhile at this time. However, it is recommended to convene a new statewide independent review panel on indirect potable reuse to summarize existing and on-going scientific research and address public health and safety as well as other concerns such as environmental justice, economic issues and public awareness.